



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/676,645	10/01/2003	Gyung-Su Cho	20067/OPP030889US	7874
34431	7590	01/19/2006	EXAMINER	
HANLEY, FLIGHT & ZIMMERMAN, LLC			NADAV, ORI	
20 N. WACKER DRIVE			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
SUITE 4220				2811
CHICAGO, IL 60606				

DATE MAILED: 01/19/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/676,645	CHO, GYUNG-SU <i>AM</i>	
	Examiner Ori Nadav	Art Unit 2811	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 03 November 2005.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-8 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-8 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>4/14/05</u> .	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION***Specification***

The title of the invention is not descriptive. A new title is required that is clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102/3

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which the subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1-3 and 5-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Liu et al. (6,638,867).

Regarding claim 1, Liu et al. teach in figure 6D and related text a semiconductor device having a pad formed by exposing a predetermined region of a metal line formed over a semiconductor substrate, the semiconductor device comprising:

an alloy layer formed on the metal line exposed through the pad, wherein the alloy layer is formed by a heat treatment at a contacting surface between the metal line and a metal having a melting point less than or equal to 1000 degrees C.

Liu et al. do not state that the alloy layer is formed by a heat treatment at a contacting surface between the metal line.

However, the claimed limitation of forming the alloy layer by a heat treatment at a contacting surface between the metal line is a process limitation which would not carry patentable weight in this claim drawn to a structure, because distinct structure is not necessarily produced.

Note that a “product by process” claim is directed to the product per se, no matter how actually made, *In re Hirao*, 190 USPQ 15 at 17 (footnote 3). See also *In re Brown*, 173 USPQ 685; *In re Luck*, 177 USPQ 523; *In re Fessmann*, 180 USPQ 324; *In re Avery*, 186 USPQ 161; *In re Wertheim*, 191 USPQ 90 (209 USPQ 554 does not deal with this issue); and *In re Marosi et al.*, 218 USPQ 289, all of which make it clear that it is the patentability of the final product per se which must be determined in a “product by process” claim, and not the patentability of the process, and that an old or obvious product produced by a new method is not patentable as a product, whether claimed in “product by process” claims or not. Note that the applicant has the burden of proof in such cases, as the above case law makes clear.

Regarding claims 2-3 and 5-6 Liu et al. teach in figure 6D and related text a metal line is made of copper (column 6, line 2), wherein

the metal having the melting point less than or equal to 1000OC is selected from the group consisting of aluminum, lead, and silver (column 6, lines 35-37), wherein a protection layer made of one of silicon nitride and silicon oxynitride (column 6, lines 59-63) is formed on the metal line except where the pad is formed, and wherein the copper is filled in a via.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Liu et al. Liu et al. teach in figure 6D and related text substantially the entire claimed structure, as applied to claim 1 above, except stating that the thickness of the alloy layer is less than a thickness of the metal line. Figure 6D of Liu et al. depict the thickness of the alloy layer is less than a thickness of the metal line. It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use the thickness of the alloy layer is less than a thickness of the metal line in Liu et al.'s device in order to form the device as taught by Liu et al. and as depicted in figure 6D.

Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Liu et al. in view of Stumborg et al. (6,077,775).

Liu et al. teach in figure 6D and related text substantially the entire claimed structure, as applied to claims 1-2 and 6 above, except a barrier metal is formed on an interface between the copper and the via made from a metal selected from the group consisting of Ti, Ta, TiN, and TaN having a thickness between 200 and 800A to prevent the diffusion of the copper out of the via.

Stumborg et al. teach in figure 2 and related text a barrier metal is formed on an interface between the copper and the via made from a metal selected from the group consisting of Ti, Ta, TiN, and TaN having a thickness between 200 and 800A to prevent the diffusion of the copper out of the via (column 5, lines 11-17).

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use a barrier metal is formed on an interface between the copper and the via made from a metal selected from the group consisting of Ti, Ta, TiN, and TaN having a thickness between 200 and 800A to prevent the diffusion of the copper out of the via in Liu et al.'s device in order to prevent the diffusion of the copper out of the via, as is well known in the art.

Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Liu et al. in view of Lee et al. (6,551,856).

Liu et al. teach in figure 6D and related text substantially the entire claimed structure, as applied to claims 1-2 and 6 above, except a width of the pad is less than a width of the via.

Lee et al. teach in figure 1 and related text a width of the pad 18 is less than a width of the via 20. It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use a width of the pad is less than a width of the via in Liu et al.'s device in order to reduce the amount of residual copper during the processing/etching steps.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-8 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the

shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ori Nadav whose telephone number is 571-272-1660. The examiner can normally be reached between the hours of 7 AM to 4 PM (Eastern Standard Time) Monday through Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eddie Lee can be reached on 571-272-1732. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



O.N.
1/13/06

ORI NADAV
PRIMARY EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2800